STACK
ANNEX
5
109
242

NO. I

SIX PENCE

TRIBALISM
IN
NIGERIA

BY

I. O. AKUNNETO
Founder & Director of the
Ibohayo Youth League
(Nigeria)

IBOHAYO YOUTH LEAGUE
ANTI-TRIBALISM PAMPHLETS

West African Printing Co. E. B. 9-648-600

A 000 093 685 6
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
California Regional Facility

Tribalism in Nigeria

TRIBALISM is the state of existence in seperate tribes of a feeling of love for one's own tribes.

It is a natural feeling which can be compared with parental feeling. It is a sort of superiority complex waging in certain ethnical groups, who own that they had either been superior in certain respects or jealous of another ethnical entity.

It's existence can be traced far back to the slavery era. Tribal wars were waged with one objective—to capture slaves which are automatically disposed of, to the "Human Trader." The winners put to shame their victims in human degradations; the psychological effect of the loosers can be better imagined, when they are cowed before those they are supposed to have vanquished.

Such was the slavery era. In Nigeria today, this enemy is still at large. Why was it not crushed when slavery was no more?

The paradox of life is that we must not only serve ourselves but serve the social group if we should know freedom and happiness in living. Serving our own exclusive purposes leads to maladjustment, introversion and unhappiness.

We must not only unite our powers but live in harmony with others. St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans said among other things "Let love be without hyprocricy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honour preferring one another; ....." Where there is love, there is friendship, and friendship lead to Unity--the giant that can obliterate TRIBALISM from Nigeria. We cannot in this twentieth century Nigeria tolerate tribalism and this objective could be achieved by mutual understanding. It is quite evident that Nigeria's irredentism lies on Nigerians.. That was why your humble author, in August 1947, founded the IBOHAYO YOUTH LEAGUE (NIGERIA) to combat against tribalism in this country through penpalism.

THE EVILS

It is the duty of any Nigerian to contribute his quota in the battle now being waged against tribalism. The evils of tribalism in Nigeria are many. Tribal appellations cause tribal idiosyncrasies; these lead ultimately to vanity and superciliousness and disharmony.

An Hausa man may think a Yoruba man his iferior, whilst the Yoruba man in turn commonises the Ibo man; and Ibo man concedes to himself that both the Hausa and Yoruba are just the people without the gut. Instead of some of our leaders helping in educating their followers that their conception of tribalism cannot withstand scientific analysis and that Nigerian is a Nigerian, place of birth not withstanding, they add more to this evil propaganda.

No leader in Nigeria today can succeed, unless he forgets his ethnical group. His service must be to Nigeria and not to any particular group. That was why I agreed with Pro. Eyo Ita M. A., B. Sc., when he said "We must widen our citizenship beyond our tribal loyalities .....every educated African should shed the cocoon of tribe, should cease to be a tribesman ....."

THE PRESS

Nigeria nPress have openly decried against it's existence; yet I believe, that if they pull their strengths together to combat against this evil, Nigeria will never forget to be grateful. Hear them :—

"Our little world called Nigeria seems to be passing at the moment, through one of the severest tests in her whole history. That her people have been evolving at a rate never before known in the annals of her existence is also admitted. But that there are forces both internal and external militating against the smooth working of this machinery of health evolution is a fact most painful to record the existence of tribalism in Nigeria. (W. A. Pilot.)

Disunity is the bane of any society composed of men with common hope, common faith, and common aspiration. The people of Nigeria, whether they are from the North, the South, the East, or the West, have one common destiny. The mill of imperialism spares no one. It is no respecter of tribal affiliation. The sledge hammer of Economic imperialism knows no difference between the Yorubas, the Ibos, the Hausas, the Fulanis, or the Kanuris. We are all Colonial peoples and victims of foreign vested interest. That is why we have always protested against tribalism." (Daily Service.)

"We wish to see Nigeria grow to maturity and take its place amongst the great nations of the world.

Let us build our future on the ideals that Christ has preached. Let us dig up root out all "isms" that Smack of Racialism, tribalism, and commercialism. Let us be friend in a common cause. (Cath. Herald.)

221229

THE WAY OUT

The big question now arises, how can we combat tribalism? However, we should understand from the beginning that we can only wipe it out through the collective efforts of the inhabitants of this "Great Paradise on Earth".

From the Pulpit. Our religious leaders should impart to their adherents in classes and from the pulpits the evils of tribalism.

There are tribes far behind others today, they seem to be sleeping. It is our duty to awake them from their lethargy instead of making jests of them. We must arouse them, help them forward and kindle in them the flame of nationalism. We should make them realise that what Europe or America has achieved, Nigeria too can, even better.

Languages. The understanding of different tribal languages is imperative. This will automatically remove the shyness, suspicion and annoyance of one tribe against another when they come across themselves in their different works of life.

Here our Education Department will have to include in the curriculum, the teaching of Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba languages in all schools and colleges throughout Nigeria.

Inter-Tribal Marriages. We should encourage inter-tribal marriages. There is no reason why an Ibo man should not marry an Hausa girl or an Hausa man marrying a Yoruba, nor can the Yoruba man adduce any law forbidden his marriage with a Cameroonian and vice visa.

Our leaders should lay the example by giving out their sons and daughters in marriage irrespective of tribe; or marry inter-tribally. Their followers will surely emulate their footprints.

Customs. The adoption of the same customs in general is also a desiradum. This can be done by examining the customs of the different tribes in Nigeria with constructive criticisms and select certain good ones to be used by all. Since the boycott strategy, our dresses have been identical. This is a very good show.

Penpalism. This is very, very important. It is only by regular contacts with ourselves, that we can gain acquaintances from different tribes. That was why the IBOHAYO YOUTH LEAGUE is open to Nigerians of both sexes in any field of human endeavour, irrespective of creed, religion or political affiliation, anywhere in the world. It should be remembered, that the few of us who may have friends from other tribes were able to do so either through the school, place of work, social activities et cetra.

Other Mediums It is also of paramount importance that we should create other mediums, where we can freely and frequently come in contact with ourselves. It may be the owning and running of business together, staging inter-tribal plays, dances, sports, arts or other social activities.

By rendering also mutual aids to ourselves at any time and at all costs. irrespective of tribe, relationship or creed.

Flattery. Flattery lavished much on any particular tribe must be thought little of. as it creates confusion and commotion. It fertilies the spread of tribalism and fuses blatant tribal hatred.

Sincerity. We must be sincere in dealing with ourselves in any form or shape. For once a trace of mistrust is discovered, hatred sets in.

Patronage. By patronising Nigerian arts, music, GOODS and having PRIDE in anything Nigerian.

Education and Home Training. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs)

Here our educators and parents will be doing the nation a great service if they start from the beginning to erase this tribalistic instinct from our youths and the leaders of tomorrow. But can they do this, if they themselves are slaves to tribalism? Hence, they must first of all, purge themselves out from it's chains.

If all the teachers and parents of this country will pledge themselves towards this type of evangelism, their gospel will be a huge success and they will have facilitated the New Nigeria.

Unity. In the animal world anthills and beehives are wonderful models of what unity can achieve. Could a single ant or bee ever succeed in raising such a complicated structure? Never. It is only their united efforts that made these possible.

Nigeria at present is like a piece of iron put in the furnace which taken out, is shaped into what it should be. Let all tribes join forces with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. With malice towards none, they could select their Officers, with charity towards all, they could win mass education, ward-off mass illiteracy and revolutionize our economical and political status quo.

CONCLUSION

Some of us might have conceived a wrong meaning of this deadly foe, and thereby find no fault or evil in its existence. But let me warn you, it has held me and you in degeneration. We should eradicate that superiority complex which some of us assume.

The Nigerian must be educated to realise that be he from Kabba, Lagos, Kantagora, Kukuruku or Owerri, his "eathly" overlords regards him as a Nigerian.

We must build a sold front. We must let our Northern Bretheren realise that geographical position is no barrier to co-operation and mutual understanding.

It is our duty to learn from them and to teach them. So too must the Ibos and Yorubas learn from each other. Nay all the ethnical groups in general. Nor should we forget our "Volcanic" brothers and sisters in the Cameroons.

Ours is a sacred mission.

We must let our fellow Nigerian be fully conscious of how debarring tribalism has been to our progress.

We must educate them by all means of the oneness of the Nigerian.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 093 685 6

Go forth to the farm, market, house, anywhere you mind him and make him to think in terms of "I AM A NIGERIAN." In conclusion read what an Ibohayoist, Mr Akinlola A. Aje said about this barricade of progress.

Down with Tribalism

I am a monster of disintegrations
For no good I work but harms
Harms, ill, political deteriorations
None likes me but the fool;
Any good that comes I root
Men think 'am harmless
Knowing myself a barricade of progress

Ibohayoist rise, all in ONE
'Gainst Monster Tribalism all I warn
Your ethnical groups to forget
If we must achieve freedom political.
Ibo, Yoruba, Hausa, Efik, Edo or Ibibio
Difference in tribe causes disunity
Therefore battle and kill Tribalism

Kill Tribalism by co-operation
No matter what the cost
No matter what people say
Tell wanton Officials they 're cullions
For your land needs must be free;
Set to work, by your trampings raise dust
Toil hard, free Nigeria from Tribalism

Scorn colour prejudice, greed and disloyalty
Hand in hand sing Unity
Corners far sing your song
Sing Unity of North and South
Battle oppression, show your light
Unite to free your dear land, so
Shout "Down with Tribalism."

TO OUR FELLOW NIGERIANS

IF

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.